

RICHMOND HILL, GEORGIA

Architectural Design Ordinance

Ford Overlay Area & Gateway Overlay Area

**Adopted by City Council
4/21/15**

**CITY OF RICHMOND HILL
STATE OF GEORGIA**

Ordinance No. ____

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND HILL, GEORGIA
AMENDING PART III OF THE RICHMOND HILL CODE OF ORDINANCE FOR THE ADDITION OF
"ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ORDINANCE"; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; REPEALING
CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

Section 1. It is hereby ordained by the Mayor and Council of the City of Richmond Hill that Part III of the Richmond Hill Code of Ordinances be amended by adding the following:

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I. General Information

A. Findings and Objective

The City Council of the City of Richmond Hill, after having reviewed the Architectural Guidelines and Ordinances of the Cities of Brunswick, Columbus, Roswell, Snellville, Warner Robins, Alpharetta, Norcross, Sandy Springs, Hapeville, Milton, and others in Georgia; and after having also reviewed learned texts and studies on this matter, To Wit: "Better Models for Commercial Development" by Edward T. McMahon, "Planning Implementation Tools and Techniques" by Forster Ndubisi, "Zoning Practice Design Guidelines" by the American Planning Association, and "Creating Design Guidelines that Work" by Douglas Hammel, AICP, as well as having received and reviewed the report of the Architectural Review Board, and the comments at a Town Hall Meeting on February 25, 2014, and at public hearings on the subject of this Ordinance held before the Planning Commission on June 23, 2014 and March 23, 2015, has determined that commercial and industrial development projects in certain areas of the City can, when unregulated, have an unnecessary impact on the aesthetics of the City, on the economy of the City, on the values of property in the City, on traffic patterns in the City, on harmonious coexistence with other uses within the City, and on the public health, safety and welfare in general.

B. Applicability

This Ordinance applies to all commercial and industrial properties, identified by use or zoning, located within the Ford Overlay Area and Gateway Overlay Area as described herein. If there is a conflict between this ordinance and any other requirement set forth by the City of Richmond Hill Code of Ordinances, the more stringent shall apply. This Ordinance shall be applicable to renovation and addition work only when the 50% rule is in effect. For the purpose of this Ordinance, the 50% rule is defined that if the cost of the renovation work exceeds 50% of the value of the building at the time of building permit application, the entire building must be brought up to the standards and requirements outlined in this Ordinance. In addition, any change of material that encompasses 50% or more of the exterior facade and/or roof of a structure must be brought up to the standards and requirements outlined in this Ordinance.

C. Definitions

- 1) *Architectural Review Board (ARB)*: A body of people appointed by the local governing authority whose responsibilities include guidance and recommendations regarding the design and aesthetic qualities of the natural and built environment, including such townscape elements as landscaping, buildings and signs.
- 2) *Façade*: Typically the front of a building however any building square on view is considered a façade.
- 3) *Fenestration*: The organization of windows on a building wall.
- 4) *Massing*: The overall visual impact of a structures' volume; a combination of height, width, and depth and the relationship of the heights, widths, and depths of the building's components.
- 5) *Mullion*: A slender vertical member that forms a division between units of a window, door, or screen or is used decoratively.
- 6) *Scale*: The relationship of a particular building mass to other nearby or adjacent development.

D. Style

Richmond Hill strongly identifies itself with the Antebellum "Plantation Plain" / Ford-Era style of architecture and construction. This style is exemplified in Richmond Hill's Strathy Hall Plantation, which was built circa 1838 and restored by Henry Ford in 1925. In the 1930's, Henry Ford built, at his own expense, The Bryan County Courthouse Annex, The Community House, Saint Anne Catholic Church, and The Kindergarten Building. Ford utilized elements of the Antebellum "Plantation Plain" style in all of these buildings. See below for images of Strathy Hall Plantation and the above mentioned Ford-Era buildings:



Image 1 – Strathy Hall Plantation



Image 2 – Bryan County Courthouse Annex



Image 3 – The Community House



Image 4 – Saint Anne Catholic Church



Image 5 – The Kindergarten Building

One of the primary purposes of this Ordinance is to extend those design elements, colors, and materials to new construction in Richmond Hill. Antebellum "Plantation Plain" / Ford-Era vernacular architecture and construction is straightforward and functional, drawing its ornament and variety from the traditional assembly of aesthetically accurate materials utilized for the roofing, exterior finish, accent exterior finish, and accent trim colors (shutters, doors, etc.) of a structure.

- Ford Overlay Area

The Ford Overlay Area shall consist of a strip, extending 450 feet from the center line of and along each side of the right of way of Georgia Route 144, commencing at its intersection with US Route 17 and extending east to its intersection with Port Royal Road. Where a lot or parcel of land lies partially within and partially without the Ford Overlay Area, The square footage of the entire lot or parcel shall be computed as well as the square footage of the same actually lying within the Overlay Area: if the resulting comparison reveals that more than 50 percent of the entire lot or parcel lies within the Overlay Area, the entire lot or parcel shall be considered to lie within the Overlay Area. If less than 50 percent of the entire lot or parcel lies within the Overlay Area, the entire lot or parcel shall be considered not to lie within the Overlay Area. Structures within the "Ford Overlay Area" shall contain a combination of the following design elements, colors, and materials for the roofing, exterior finish, accent exterior finish, and accent trim colors (shutters, doors, etc.) of a structure, and be historically appropriate to the design elements, colors, and materials used in Antebellum "Plantation Plain" / Ford-Era vernacular architecture:

- Roofing
 - Silver standing-seam metal
 - Black architectural shingles
- Exterior Finish
 - White clapboard siding

The construction materials used for the clapboard siding shall be natural material such as wood siding, cementitious siding, or otherwise equal as approved by the City of Richmond Hill Architecture Review Board (ARB).

The following colors are acceptable for the exterior finish color and are found on the color palette available for inspection in the Department of Planning & Zoning. All color names are for reference only and no specific brand of paint is required.

Color Name	RGB#
High Reflective White	R=248 G=249 B=243
Extra White	R=239 G=240 B=236
Ceiling Bright White	R=233 G=236 B=232
Pure White	R=238 G=237 B=231
Zurich White	R=230 G=226 B=219
Windfresh White	R=222 G=216 B=208
Snowbound	R=238 G=235 B=229
Eider White	R=226 G=222 B=216
Origami White	R=230 G=226 B=219
White Heron	R=229 G=224 B=215
Topue White	R=229 G=225 B=217
Heron Plume	R=230 G=226 B=217
Moderne White	R=226 G=225 B=216
Silverpointe	R=209 G=210 B=205
First Star	R=218 G=217 B=213
Rhinestone	R=222 G=224 B=223
Downey	R=238 G=232 B=221
Modest White	R=231 G=222 B=212
Marshmallow	R=239 G=234 B=225
Reliable White	R=232 G=224 B=212
Kestrel White	R=224 G=214 B=201
Panda White	R=233 G=226 B=213
Pacer White	R=229 G=222 B=208
White Duck	R=230 G=224 B=211
Fragile Beauty	R=231 G=216 B=199
Bauhaus Buff	R=231 G=219 B=205
Divine White	R=231 G=222 B=206
China Doll	R=220 G=206 B=190
Eggwhite	R=242 G=232 B=210
Décor White	R=242 G=230 B=210
Summer White	R=244 G=233 B=215
Crème	R=243 G=231 B=210
Steamed Milk	R=235 G=225 B=210
Moderate White	R=232 G=223 B=207
Creamy	R=238 G=234 B=220
Maison Blanche	R=223 G=211 B=193
Medici Ivory	R=242 G=232 B=216

Navajo White	R=234 G=223 B=201
Casa Blanca	R=236 G=225 B=208
Antique White	R=231 G=222 B=199
Muslin	R=232 G=225 B=201
Dover White	R=239 G=236 B=221
Polar Bear	R=233 G=224 B=204
Restful White	R=238 G=232 B=215
Ivory Lace	R=232 G=228 B=216
Westhighland White	R=242 G=238 B=228
Alabaster	R=238 G=235 B=225
Greek Villa	R=239 G=236 B=227
Nacre	R=232 G=228 B=212
Neutral Ground	R=227 G=218 B=204
Natural Choice	R=227 G=222 B=208
Oyster White	R=228 G=223 B=211
Pearly White	R=231 G=228 B=217
Shoji White	R=230 G=224 B=211
Aesthetic White	R=228 G=223 B=212
City Loft	R=224 G=218 B=210

- Accent Exterior Finish
 - White stucco (white color from approved palette listed above)
 - Tabby
 - Savannah grey colored brick

The following Savannah grey colored bricks are acceptable for the accent exterior finish and are found on the brick sample boards available for inspection in the Department of Planning & Zoning:

- Savannah Grey manufactured by Old Carolina Brick Company
- Oyster Bay-Tumbled manufactured by Statesville Brick
- Castle Rock Tudor manufactured by General Shale
- Or otherwise equal as approved by the City of Richmond Hill Architecture Review Board (ARB)

The following mortar colors are acceptable:

- Savannah Ivory manufactured by Argos
- Ivory Buff manufactured by Argos
- Putty manufactured by Argos
- Or otherwise equal as approved by the City of Richmond Hill Architecture Review Board (ARB)

- Accent Trim Colors (shutters, doors, etc.)
 - Black
 - Charleston Green with specified RGB number: R=35 | G=43 | B=43

See Figure 1 below for an illustrative map of the general location of the "Ford Overlay Area":

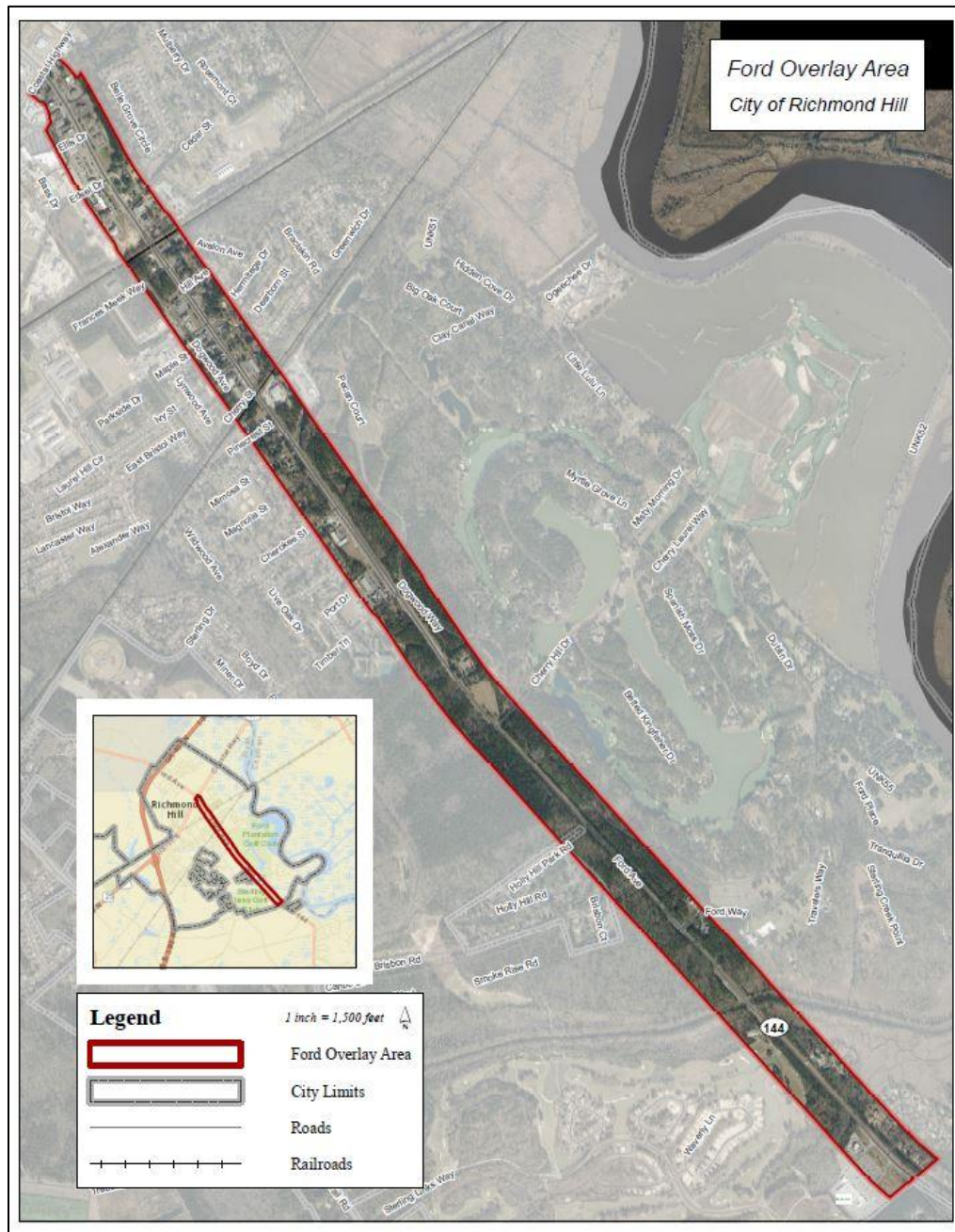


Figure 1 – Ford Overlay Area

- Gateway Overlay Areas**

The Gateway Overlay Area shall consist of two parts, described as follows: Gateway Overlay Area 1 shall consist of a strip extending 450 feet from the center line of and along each side of the right of way of Georgia Route 144, commencing at its intersection with Thunderbird Drive and extending east to its intersection with US Route 17. Gateway Overlay Area 2 shall

consist of a strip, extending 450 feet from the centerline of and along each side of the right of way of US Route 17, commencing at its intersection with Harris Trail Road and extending north to the Richmond Hill City Limits, except that where any part of either Gateway Overlay Area overlaps the Ford Overlay Area, the Ford Overlay Area shall prevail, and such overlapped area shall be considered a part of the Ford Overlay Area and not a part of the Gateway Overlay Area. Where a lot or parcel of land lies partially within and partially without either of the Gateway Overlay Areas, The square footage of the entire lot or parcel shall be computed as well as the square footage of the same actually lying within the Overlay Area: if the resulting comparison reveals that more than 50 percent of the entire lot or parcel lies within the Overlay Area, the entire lot or parcel shall be considered to lie within the Overlay Area. If less than 50 percent of the entire lot or parcel lies within the Overlay Area, the entire lot or parcel shall be considered not to lie within the Overlay Area. Structures within the "Gateway Overlay Area" shall contain at least two (2) of the design elements, colors, or materials of Antebellum "Plantation Plain" / Ford-Era architectural design for the roofing, exterior finish, accent exterior finish, and accent trim colors (shutters, doors, etc.) of a structure. However, if approved by the Architectural Review Board (ARB), some variation will be considered for the roofing colors, exterior finish materials and colors, and accent trim colors, so long as the application of materials and colors is similar in appearance to those used in Antebellum "Plantation Plain" / Ford-Era vernacular architecture outlined above.

See Figure 2 below for an illustrative map of the general location of the "Gateway Overlay Area":

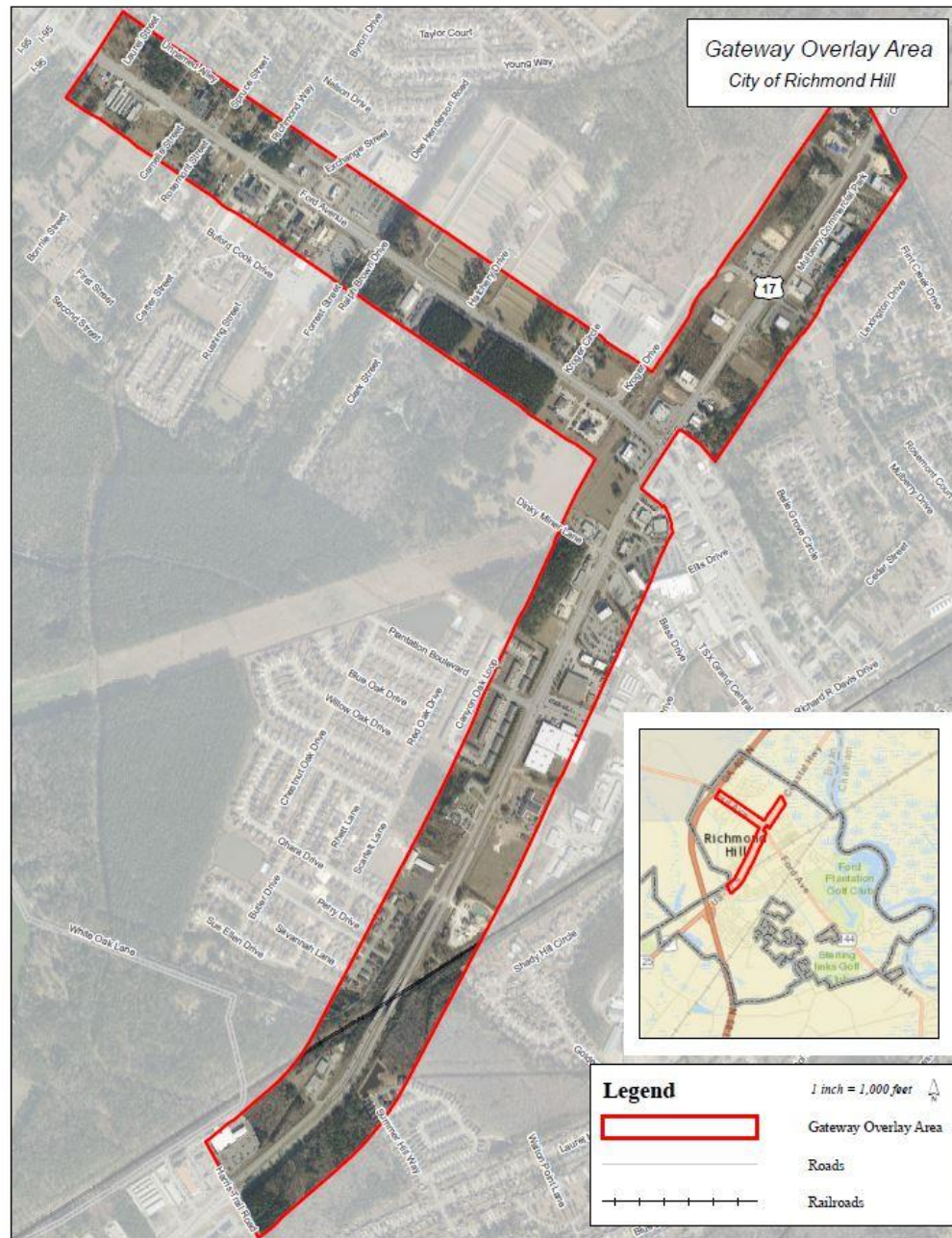


Figure 2 – Gateway Overlay Area

The following example images exemplify some of the design elements which are considered appropriate in the Gateway Overlay Area:



Image 6 – Publix Shopping Center



Image 7 – Publix Shopping Center Shops



Image 8 – Parker's Gas & Convenience Store



Image 9 – Parker's Plaza



Image 10 – Ameris Bank

II. Site Design Guidelines

A. General

The Zoning Ordinance of Richmond Hill, Georgia should be referenced for specific standards and conditions pertaining to each individual project. It can be found by contacting the Planning & Zoning Department at (912) 756-3641 or online at www.municode.com/library/ga/richmond_hill.

B. Site Design

Development should be designed in a manner that is consistent with the surrounding development pattern and context. This refers to the spatial relationship between structures and the right-of-way, circulation patterns, existing vegetation and topography, the architectural elements in surrounding development, and the size and form of new structures in relation to existing development. Where new buildings and uses are similar to those on adjoining sites, the design should reflect similar setbacks, building height and form, scale and mass, complementary materials and colors, and landscape treatment. The intent is not uniformity, but compatibility.

Site components such as structures, parking areas, driveways and outdoor functions should be arranged and located to emphasize the aesthetically pleasant components of the site, such as existing mature trees and views, or superior architectural features. New buildings should be oriented toward the adjoining public streets, so that public entrances are a focal point on the building and site layout.

It is strongly encouraged that site designs within the "Ford Overlay Area" and "Gateway Overlay Area" include fencing along adjacent roads in keeping with the Antebellum "Plantation Plain" / Ford-Era style fencing (See Richmond Hill Landscaping Ordinance). All fencing along adjacent roads within the "Ford Overlay Area" and "Gateway Overlay Area" shall be constructed with white posts and rails, along with Savannah Gray colored brick columns.

C. Site Landscaping

Please refer to the Richmond Hill Landscaping Ordinance

D. Parking Areas

Parking lots should not be the dominant visual element of the site. It is generally more visually appealing to locate parking lots along the side or the rear of buildings. Buildings should not be located in a manner that make them appear like "islands" surrounded by paved areas.

The number of site accesses (ingress/egress) should be controlled in terms of the location and number of driveways to minimize traffic safety conflicts, street congestion, and unnecessarily disrupted street frontage. To encourage connectivity, parking lots should provide vehicle access, at appropriate points, to adjacent properties. Adjoining properties should share access driveways to minimize the number of driveways along public streets where possible. Shared service or secondary access alleys should also be considered.

E. Walkways

Sidewalks should be compatible with adjacent development to create continuity and visual linkage. Pedestrian walkways should connect parking lots to main building entrances. Street sidewalk should connect to building entrance for easy access for pedestrian traffic.

F. Site Lighting

1. General Lighting

All lighting fixtures should be decorative in design, and should complement the architectural and design themes established for the site. The light source (lamp) should only be metal halide or LED. The lamp type selected should be consistent throughout the site. Illumination levels shall not exceed the recommended levels established by the most recent publication of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, as assigned by activity or use. Light sources should not be visible, and should be shielded to reflect down onto the ground and not out onto the streets or neighboring property.



Image 11 – Decorative Site Lighting

2. Service Station Canopy and Other Service Area Lighting

Service station canopy lighting should be directional downward. Pole-mounted lighting within service or loading areas may be required to provide additional shielding so that the light is contained specifically within the service or loading area.

G. Site Furnishings

Pedestrian scale is encouraged, and sites should incorporate amenities such as courtyards, plazas, shaded arcades, and functional landscaped areas should link adjoining buildings and take advantage of outdoor space. These features can be located in areas with recessed facades or setbacks in excess of minimum standards. These areas may be designed for use by employees and/or customers. Pedestrian features such as benches, tables, fountains, artwork and landscaping should be incorporated as focal points. Site furnishings must be compatible with the architectural style.

H. Site Signage

Refer to the Richmond Hill Signage Regulations.

I. Site Development

1. Utilities

All utilities should be located underground. The City of Richmond Hill Engineering Design Standard should be referenced for specific standards and conditions pertaining to each individual project.

2. Features and Constraints

The design of new development should be sensitive to, and incorporate, the existing natural constraints and amenity opportunities of the site. These features include sloped or steep topography, drainage or biological areas, existing trees, views, etc. These types of features should be incorporated into the site design as amenities and/or not be disturbed.

III. Building Design Guidelines

A. Scale and Massing

1. General

Variations in the roof line should be implemented to add visual interest and reduce the overall scale of buildings.



Image 12 – Variations in Roof Line

Building exterior walls visible to the public should be made visually interesting by the use of architectural details and relief on a minimum of 30 foot intervals.

The “scale” of a building refers to the relationship of a particular building mass, to other nearby or adjacent development. The overall scale of buildings, as well as individual design elements and

how they are integrated into a building design, affects whether it is “in scale” with surrounding development and the landscape. The amount of space on a site also dictates the extent to which a building is in scale with the surroundings. For instance, buildings may appear more in scale within a site if there are sufficient open areas or setbacks incorporated.

The height, width, and depth of a structure create the overall “massing” of a building. Achieving attractive building massing for large structures is challenging, and requires extra creativity in architectural design. The larger the massing of a building with unbroken building walls and rooflines, the larger and more bulky it will appear on the site on which it is located and in the surrounding area. Appropriate building massing is achieved when it does not dominate building elevations with large blank walls.

Massing can be reduced through several methods including, but not limited to:

- recessing building floors above the first story;
- providing vertical or horizontal offsets in the wall surfaces at regular intervals, including columns, projections, and recesses, (e.g. every 20 feet);
- reducing the overall size of buildings;
- incorporating other structures on the site with varying sizes;
- articulating details around doors, windows, balconies, plate lines, providing details such as “belly-bands”, recessed design

2. Commercial

No wall surface should exceed 30 feet in length without an interruption in the horizontal plane of the wall of a minimum of 2 feet and a vertical change in height of at least 4 feet for a length of at least 15 feet.

3. Industrial

No wall surface should exceed 75 feet without interruption in the horizontal plane of the wall by a minimum of 10 percent (i.e. 200 feet of wall should have at least two wall breaks approximately 75 feet apart and offset approximately 7-1/2 feet per wall step).

B. Façade Design

Developers are encouraged to create the impression of a second story on single-story sections of a building, and to create a design that gives the impression of several smaller common wall buildings rather than one monolithic building. Such vertical variety should give visual emphasis to the primary entrance.



Image 13 – Second Story Appearance on Single-Story Building

The first floor of multi-story buildings should create interaction between pedestrian and building activities. Differentiate the ground floor portion of the façade from upper stories through architectural detailing such as cornice lines, changes of material, and stepped building faces. Buildings should be designed with a visually distinct base, middle, and top through changes in details, materials, color, and texture.

C. Roofing

All flat roofs (less than 4:12 pitch) and rooftop equipment should be concealed by parapet walls. Parapets should include architecturally correct decorative elements like frieze and cornice detailing. Low-slope roofs at strip centers and big box centers should slope to the rear.



Image 14 – Parapet Design & Detailing

Steep slope roofs should have architecturally appropriate slopes between 4:12 and 8:12, and should be standing-seam metal.

Gutters and downspouts should not be visible on exterior walls visible to the public.

Extremely large roof elements that predominate the other architectural features of a building can appear visually overwhelming and excessive, massive, and generally unattractive. Thus, roof design

should be “in scale” with the other building features. Rooflines should be broken up and varied by providing change in the height of a portion of the roof(s), change in form, or other articulations.

Roof mounted mechanical devices should be screened from all public views, such as below a roof parapet.

D. Windows and Openings

Windows and doors should create a pattern typical to the architectural vernacular. In strip centers and big box centers, the windows should include mullions to avoid large expanses of glass.

E. Building Signage

Please refer to the Richmond Hill Signage Regulations.

F. Enclosures and Screening

Please refer to the Richmond Hill Landscaping Ordinance.

Buildings, walls, and landscaping should be arranged to screen less visually aesthetic components necessary for commercial and industrial development, including loading and service bays, storage areas, trash enclosures, mechanical equipment, and noise and odor producing functions. Service areas should be located at the sides and/or rear of main buildings, and screened with compatible architectural features and walls. All accessory buildings shall be constructed to match the architectural features of the main structure on the parcel or shall be screened from public view.

IV. Administrative Procedures

A. Review and Permitting

1. Pre-Application Review: Applicants are strongly encouraged to meet with the Architectural Review Board prior to submission of architectural renderings, elevations, or plans to discuss design concepts or present a preliminary design for discussion with the Board. Such discussions shall not be binding on the applicant or the Board, are strictly at the option of the applicant, and no official action will be taken by the Board regarding the discussion or presentation. Placement on the Board's agenda shall be scheduled through the zoning administrator.
2. Upon the filing of an application for a permit, the zoning administrator shall, within 2 business days, determine if the application is complete in all respects as required by this Section. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant as though no application had been received, with notice of deficiencies and non-filing.
3. Upon the determination that an application is complete, the zoning administrator shall forward copies of the application to the Architectural Review Board.
4. Technical Review: The zoning administrator shall review all plans and specifications submitted with regard to compliance with the technical requirements of this Article and all other ordinances and laws of the city.

5. Design Review: The Architectural Review Board shall consider the architectural plans and shall prepare a recommendation for approval, approval with conditions, denial or tabling the application. The recommendation of the Architectural Review Board, unless it is tabled, will be transmitted to the zoning administrator for inclusion in the zoning administrator's report to the City Council.
6. The Architectural Review Board will meet twice a month to review submissions from the zoning administrator. Official notification will be given to the public, as required, if days, time or meeting venue changes. The Architectural Review Board will make a recommendation for approval, approval with conditions, denial or tabling the application and such recommendation, unless it is tabled, will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration at the next City Council meeting.
7. Based on review of the permit application and the recommendations of the Architectural Review Board, the Mayor and Council shall take such action that it deems appropriate to approve, approve with conditions, deny or tabling the application no later than 60 calendar days from the receipt of the complete application. An action to deny an application shall be based on reasons for such denial and stated or submitted in writing for the record.
8. Upon approval or approval with conditions by the Mayor and Council, the zoning administrator shall issue a permit accordingly.
9. If no decision is made within 60 calendar days by the Mayor and Council, the permit will be deemed granted, unless an extension of time is requested by the applicant or the city, and agreed to by the Mayor and Council prior to the expiration of the 60 day period. Applications that have been denied shall not be resubmitted within fewer than 6 months from the date of denial.

B. Required Submissions

From and after the effective date hereof, every application for development meeting Section I. B. of this Ordinance shall include architectural plan submittals including elevation facade drawings, plan view drawing, renderings, and specifications as may be required to clearly illustrate the architectural design elements of the building, including the construction materials, size, and color of all elements of the building. A material sample board shall also be provided showing examples of proposed materials and colors to be used for all exterior elements.

C. Variances

Variances may be granted by the Mayor & Council from the application of the provisions of this Article only if all of the following findings are made:

- 1) Strict conformity with the provisions of this Article cannot be met without undue hardship to the property due to physical circumstances or conditions;
- 2) That granting the variance will not cause substantial detriment to the public good.

The procedures for consideration of variances to this Ordinance shall be the same as for variances generally.

D. Criteria

In deciding any variance hereunder as well as any otherwise equal color or material or any other variation permitted or requested under this ordinance, all City Boards and Officials shall be strictly guided by the following criteria:

- 1) That there are unique physical circumstances or conditions beyond that of surrounding properties, including irregularity, narrowness or shallowness of the lot size or shape, or exceptional topographical or other physical conditions, peculiar to the particular property.
- 2) That because of such physical circumstance or conditions, the property cannot be developed in strict conformity with the provisions of this ordinance without undue hardship to the property.
- 3) The similarity or dissimilarity of the alternate color, material or method requested to surrounding structures.
- 4) Will the proposed color, material or method substantially conflict with existing structures in the zone or neighborhood?
- 5) Would the proposed color, material or method precipitate similar requests which would generate or accelerate adverse changes in the zone or neighborhood?
- 6) Will the proposed color, material or method have any impact on any present or planned historic site or development in the City?
- 7) The proximity of the proposed color, material or method to fully compliant structures.
- 8) Will the proposed variation impact adjacent or nearby properties in terms of the suitability of their existing uses, property values or aesthetics?
- 9) General patterns in the area and the degree of compliance of surrounding structures.
- 10) Has the proposed color, material or method previously been approved in the same overlay area?

Section 2. All ordinances or parts of ordinance in conflict with this ordinance are, to the extent of such conflict, hereby repealed.

Section 3. This Ordinance shall be effective upon its adoption.

SO ORDAINED, this ___ day of ____, 2015.

Mayor

Council Member

Council Member

Council Member

Council Member

Attest:

City Clerk